

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 211140Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7201

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 12709

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON AND AMBASSADOR EILTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EG

SUBJECT: FAHMY'S TRAVEL PLANS; LEBANON; GULF OF SUEZ

REF: CAIRO 12595

1. OSAMA AL-BAZ INFORMED ME TODAY THAT FAHMY'S PLANS FOR TRAVEL TO U.S. ARE VERY MUCH UP IN THE AIR AND THAT THERE IS DISTINCT POSSIBILITY HE WILL NOT GO AT ALL TO U.S. "THIS YEAR", WHICH I TAKE TO REFER TO THIS YEAR'S UNGA. WHEN I REMINDED AL BAZ THAT FAHMY HAD ACCEPTED DATES OF SEPTEMBER 27 AND OCTOBER 4 FOR MEETINGS WITH THE SECRETARY, HE REPEATED THAT BECAUSE OF LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS, FAHMY MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO GO AT ALL. HE SAID HE WOULD KNOW DEFINITELY BY THURSDAY AND WOULD LET ME KNOW THEN. I TOLD HIM THAT YOU BOTH PLANNED TO MEET FAHMY WHEN HE ARRIVES IN NEW YORK; AL BAZ SAID THAT WOULD BE NICE GESTURE, BUT IT WAS BY NO MEANS SURE THAT FAHMY WOULD GO. COMMENT: MY BEST ESTIMATE NOW IS THAT FAHMY WILL PROBABLY NOT GO, GIVEN NEGOTIATIONS ON LEBANON, RAMADAN BAIRAM FEAST (PROBABLY SEPTEMBER 24-27), OCTOBER 6 CELEBRATION, AND POSSIBLE ARAB MINI-SUMMIT OCTOBER 8.

2. LEBANON. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, OSAMA AL BAZ SAID HE WAS STILL OPTIMISTIC THAT A SETTLEMENT OF LEBANESE CRISIS WOULD BE WORKED OUT. HE WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON BASIS
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FOR THIS OPTIMISM, BUT IMPLIED FAHMY DEVOTING HIS FULL

ATTENTION TO EGYPTIAN EFFORTS TO BRING OFF SOLUTION.

3. GULF OF SUEZ. WHEN I REPEATED THAT I WAS AVAILABLE TO RECEIVE FAHMY'S RESPONSE TO SECRETARY'S MESSAGE ON TALKS WITH ISRAELIS ABOUT AMOCO OPERATION IN GULF OF SUEZ, AL BAZ SAID FAHMY WAS INFORMED OF MY DISCUSSIONS WITH MINPET HILAL ON SEPTEMBER 18 AND THAT WE SHOULD CONSIDER HILAL'S STATEMENTS AS DEFINITIVE GOE RESPONSE. COMMENT. THERE HAS BEEN NO MENTION IN EGYPTIAN PRESS (EXCEPT FOR UPI ITEM IN EGYPTIAN GAZETTE SEPTEMBER 18) CONCERNING RESULTS OF WASHINGTON TALKS WITH ISRAELIS. SENIOR EGYPTIAN EDITOR TOLD ME PRESS HAS INSTRUCTIONS TO LAY OFF SUBJECT. I DO NOT KNOW HOW LONG WRAPS WILL BE KEPT ON GIVEN EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN ISRAELI MEDIA. END COMMENT.
MATTHEWS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CAIRO12709
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760356-0514
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760938/aaaabgqx.tel
Line Count: 76
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 CAIRO 12595
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <13 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FAHMY'S TRAVEL PLANS; LEBANON; GULF OF SUEZ
TAGS: PFOR, EG, (FAHMY, ISMAIL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006